

## **IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows, wherein strikethrough indicates matter that is to be deleted and underlining indicates matter that is to be added:

1. (Previously Presented) A communication method comprising:  
receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;  
prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;  
determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and  
indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving an input from the first user, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM message to the third user; and  
conveying the IM message to the third user in response to receiving the input.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
indicating to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
indicating to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.
5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
waiting a predefined time interval prior to requesting prompting the first user for permission.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
indicating to the first user, in the absence of a response from the second user during the predefined time interval, that the second user is unavailable.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein requesting permission from the first user is responsive to an absence of an input from the second user during the predefined time interval.
9. (Previously Presented) A communication method comprising:  
receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;  
conveying the IM message to a third user;  
determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and  
indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising:  
indicating to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.
11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising:  
indicating to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 12~~, claim 9, further comprising:

further indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that an IM chat session is being established between the first user and the third user.

14. (Previously Presented) A communication system comprising:

receive logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user; and

prompting logic configured to prompt the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;

determining logic configured to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

15. (Previously Presented) A communication system comprising:

means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user; and

means for prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;

means for determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

means for indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

16. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to prompt the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

17. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an input from the first user, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM message to the fourth user; and  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to convey the IM message to the third user in response to receiving input from the first user.

18. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising:  
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the

first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.

19. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to wait a predefined time interval prior to requesting the input from the first user.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 21, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first user, in the absence of a response from the second user during the predefined time interval, that the second user is unavailable.

23. (Previously Presented) A communication system comprising:  
receive logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user; and

conveying logic configured to convey the IM message to a third user;

determining logic configured to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

indicating logic configured to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

24. (Previously Presented) A communication system comprising:

- means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user; and
- means for conveying the IM message to a third user;
- means for determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and
- means for indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

25. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium comprising:

- computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user; and
- computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to convey the IM message to a third user;
- computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and
- computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further

comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.

27. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to further indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user that an IM chat session is being established between the first sender and the third user.